

## REPORT OF LAKES REGION PLANNING COMMISSION

The Lakes Region has changed tremendously in the past 25 years. Homes and businesses have expanded along major roadways and many of our communities have experienced dramatic changes. This growth has resulted in a number of regional challenges. The Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC) is the area organization established to address the effects of growth at both the local and regional level. With a service area covering over 1,200 square miles in Belknap, Carroll, Grafton and Merrimack Counties, the LRPC provides a wide range of planning services to member municipalities. The Commission offers direct support services ranging from technical assistance, geographic information systems, and transportation planning, to land use and environmental planning, and economic development. Local, state, and federal resources primarily fund the LRPC. We are contacted several times daily for answers to local and statewide issues. We also maintain a regular dialogue with state agencies as a resource for the entire Lakes Region. Our goal remains to provide support and leadership to the governments, businesses, and citizens of the Lakes Region.

Listed below are some of the services performed on behalf of Alton and the region in the past fiscal year:

- ❖ Continue to assist local officials with an update for the town's master plan.
- ❖ Coordinated with town staff regarding information required for LRPC to review a subdivision application that was determined by the planning board to be a development of regional impact.
- ❖ Provided demographic data and surface water acreage information for the town fire department.
- ❖ Provided information on methods used to calculate length to width ration for a triangle lot.
- ❖ Prepared a preliminary report on Housing and School Enrollments in the Lakes Region with a final report due in the fall of 2006. Funding was provided in part by grants obtained by LRPC.
- ❖ Initiated a Virtual Agriculture Tour of the region: a pilot project designed to illustrate how the Internet and GIS can be used to identify and bolster agricultural activity.
- ❖ Completed and distributed the *2006 Development Activity in the Lakes Region* report on the Lakes Region development trends. Prepared and distributed a development survey for 2006-2007.
- ❖ Planned and coordinated the 20<sup>th</sup> annual household hazardous waste collection in the Lakes Region. Two consecutive Saturdays were designated as collection days for 24 participating communities. An estimated 20,000 total gallons of waste were collected, containerized, and transported to EPA approved end-of-life locations around the country.
- ❖ Convened several meetings of the LRPC Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to enhance local involvement in transportation planning and project development. The TAC advises the LRPC on transportation projects of regional significance.
- ❖ Co-hosted and organized three public Municipal Law Lectures in Meredith where practicing attorneys provide legal perspective on local planning, zoning, and other municipal issues. Recent lectures included: Off-Site Extractions and Impact Fees; Balancing Municipal Interests and Private Property Rights; Ethics for Land Use Board Members; and Land Use Regulations: Constitutional Challenges and the Evolving Law of Variances. Also convened a regional meeting on the use of conservation subdivisions as an effective land use conservation tool.

- ❖ Secured funding from the NH Emergency Management Bureau to assist local communities with the preparation of all hazard management plans.
- ❖ Prepared a model steep slopes ordinance and a draft agricultural land preservation ordinance. Both are to be included in an innovative zoning guidebook to be released by the NH Department of Environmental Services in 2007.
- ❖ Awarded \$50,000 from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to prepare a Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDS). LRPC will bring various stakeholders together to develop a regional vision and plan for regional economic progress. A completed CEDS will also provide communities with improved access to EDA funding for infrastructure and economic development projects, a benefit not currently available.
- ❖ Adopted the Lakes Region Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan; a planning effort that will help provide a blueprint for the location of regional and local bike and pedestrian routes.
- ❖ Conducted over 150 traffic counts around the region, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT). LRPC is also preparing and updating local road inventories, on a town-by-town basis, that will be used by the DOT.
- ❖ Participated in the Lakes Region Household Hazardous Product Facility board of directors to explore the ways and means that the facility may encourage communities to participate in its use as members.
- ❖ Convened seven commission meetings, including four area meetings, which featured a diverse range of topics ranging from a presentation focusing on how scenic views affect local property assessments, an update of LRPC's Regional Goals and objectives which was accomplished with discussions and recommendations over the four area meetings and adoption in September of this year, an amendment to the Standing Rules and Procedures for the LRPC Transportation Advisory Committee, and an update on the recent achievements of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County.
- ❖ Continue to represent the region on several boards and committees related to the economic and environmental well-being of the region, e.g., the Belknap County Economic Development Council, the Grafton County Economic Development Council, the Pemigewasset River local Advisory Committee, the North Country Resource and Conservation Development Council, etc.
- ❖ Reviewed project proposals through the NH Intergovernmental Review Agreement that provides the region and local communities an opportunity to respond to applications seeking state and federal aid. LRPC reviewed many proposals having a combined investment total greater than \$15 million in the Lakes Region.
- ❖ Produced a calendar of critical deadlines for March town Meeting, and distributed it via our web site and regular mail.
- ❖ Ordered and distributed many copies of the NH Planning and Land Use Regulation books to member planning boards at considerable savings. Copies are provided to individual planning board members.